

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /151 W

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P R 190510Z FEB 74

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0781

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USMISSION USUN NY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0085

BEIRUT PASS DAMASCUS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, IZ, IR

SUBJ: IRAQI-IRANIAN BORDER CLASH

REF: BAGHDAD 0082

1. SURVEY OF DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES AND MILITARY ATTACHES SUGGESTS

MOST OBSERVERS IN DARK ABOUT FEB 10 BORDER CLASH. SOVIET MINISTER POPOV TOLD ME THAT BORDER NEAR BADRA WAS DETERMINED BY 1937 TREATY BUT IN AREA OF CLASH IT HAD NEVER BEEN DEMARCATED ON GROUND.THERE WAS THEREFORE BASIS FOR CONFLICT WHICH WAS AGGRAVATED BY IRANIAN UNILATERAL ABROGATION OF 1937 TREATY WHICH HAD REMOVED LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR NEGOTIATIONS. POPOV SPECULATED THAT CLASH RELATED TO IRAN'S DESIRE TO PREVENT RESOLUTION KURDISH PROBLEM FOR FEAR IT WOULD EVENTUALLY HAVE ADVERSE IMPACT ON IRANIAN KURDS.

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2. TURKISH AMB CUHRUK SAID THAT THERE IS DISPUTED AREA NEAR

BADRA WHICH HAS CAUSED PROBLEMS IN PAST BETWEEN BORDER FORCES. HE SAID IRAQIS HAD DECIDED TO CONSTRUCT SEVERAL SMALL REDOUBTS ON HIGH GROUND. THIS ACTION WAS APPARENTLY PRETEXT IRANIANS HAD BEEN WAITING FOR AND THEY LAUNCHED ATTACK TO DEMOLISH REDOUBTS. CUHRUK ALSO THOUGHT IRANIAN ACTION WAS DESIGNED TO COMPLICATE RESOLUTION OF KURDISH PROBLEM.

3. VERSION OF EGYPTIAN MILITARY ATTACHE IS THAT FOLLOWING MINOR INCIDENTS IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY IRAQIS MOVED TO BRIGADES INTO BADRA AREA AND LAUNCHED FEB 10 ATTACK TO RECOVER HIGH GROUND PREVIOUSLY SEIZED BY IRANIAN FORCES.

4. COMMENT: WHATEVER ORIGIN OF FEB 10 CLASH, IT SERVES TO REMIND IRAQIS OF THEIR MILITARY INFERIORITY VIS-A-VIS IRAN AND THEIR LACK OF PROTECTION SHOULD IRAN DECIDE TO LAUNCH SERIOUS ATTACK. ONE OF REACTIONS LIKELY TO BE REINFORCEMENT OF SOVIET POSITION AS PREDOMINANT FOREIGN POWER AT TIME WHEN

THIS POSITION BEING UNDERMINED BY BURGEONING ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH WEST EUROPEANS AND JAPAN AND BILATERAL DIFFERENCES WITH SOVIETS OVER OIL PRICES AND MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT.

5. WHETHER OR NOT IRAN WISHES TO DISRUPT POSSIBLE KURDISH SETTLEMENT SHOULD BECOME CLEAR DURING NEXT FEW WEEKS SINCE GOI-KDP NEGOTIAUIONS REPORTEDLY PROCEEDING WELL AND GOI EXPECTED TO PROCLAIM SOME FORM OF KURDISH AUTONOMY ON MARCH 11 EVEN IF BARZANI NOT WILLING TO SIGN FORMAL AGREEMENT. LOWRIE

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